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The return of the living dead: unsettlement and the Tasmanian tiger

Nicholas Smith*

LaTrobe University, Melbourne

Australia has the ignominious distinction of having "lost" approximately half the world's mammals. Among these extinctions the Tasmanian tiger is perhaps the most iconic, not least because the "undead" thylacine has been routinely sighted since it passed into oblivion in the 1930s. I regard narratives of the "extinct" thylacine as a form of what Lacan called the "return of the real", that is, a positionality between a symbolic death and an actual death. My methodology has been dictated as much by the elusiveness of my subject as by my own fascination with its discursive configuration. Following Steve Baker, I consider any understanding of the thylacine as being bound to its cultural representation; and as such I grant equal conceptual weight to accounts of the representational or the symbolic thylacine as I do to the "real" thylacine. Using published accounts of the colonial encounter with both the biophysical environment and the indigenous (Palawa) population, data drawn from an eclectic range of scientific and "natural history" texts as well as sources from popular culture, I argue that until the trauma of colonial abjection is reconciled (integrated into our historical memory) the undead will continue to return and haunt the Australian imaginary.

Keywords: extinction; Tasmania; thylacine; undead

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Introduction

We pursue your footprints as though they could cure history (Edith Speers)[1]

"Post" colonial discourses exhibit a characteristic instability; they are never entirely removed from colonialism's grip. This paper interrogates narratives of the "extinct" thylacine (or as it is more commonly known, the Tasmanian tiger) as representative of a Lacanian "return of the real", that is, a positionality between a symbolic death and an actual death. Taking my cue from Bernard Smith's 1980 Boyer Lecture series, *The Spectre of Truganini*,[2] this paper examines some of the ways in which the brutality of the colonial conquest of nature and native are rekindled and suppressed in the national imaginary. My own methodology has been dictated as much by the elusiveness of my subject as by my own fascination with its discursive configuration. Following Steve Baker, I regard any understanding of the thylacine as being bound to its cultural representation;[3] and as such I grant equal conceptual weight to accounts of the representational or the symbolic thylacine as I do to the "real" thylacine. Using published accounts of the colonial encounter with both the biophysical environment and the indigenous population, data drawn from an eclectic range of scientific and "natural history" texts as well as sources from popular culture , I argue

*Email: nicholas.smith@latrobe.edu.au

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that the mutual reflexivity of these narratives of colonisation underpin contemporary depictions of the thylacine. For example, in November 1987, during a session of the Tasmanian Parliament, the (then) Premier Robin Gray and the (then) Independent Member of the House of Assembly (and prominent conservationist), Dr Bob Brown, exchanged salvoes regarding the choice of animal to adorn the Tasmanian flag. Gray advocated the use of the lion while Brown adamantly defended the use of the thylacine as the most appropriate Tasmanian symbol, arguing that while "the Tasmanian tiger may be extinct"; it was not dead "in the hearts and minds of blue-blooded Tasmanians". Brown went on to say that the thylacine "symbolises a lot of history of the state" and that Tasmanians "shouldn't forget what [they] did to it".[4] More recently echoing Brown's metonymy, David Owen, Tasmanian crime fiction-cum-natural history writer asserts "the thylacine *is* Tasmania. To that extent alone, it lives on".[5] Similarly in 1999 Dr Mike Archer, the (then) newly appointed director of the Australian Museum attracted international media attention by announcing an attempt to clone a thylacine, extracting DNA from a "pickled pup" originally preserved in alcohol in 1866. Archer stated that re-animating the thylacine would "reverse one of the great blots on the history of the colonisation of Australia", adding "there's a moral imperative here. It's not God's will that the thylacine went extinct. We did it".[6]

Not forgetting is a key to the origins of contemporary unsettlement. Both Archer and Senator Brown echo an environmentalist *mea culpa*, a belief that settler Australians need to rekindle the primordial crime of the colonial past. In Tasmania where Palawa (Indigenous Tasmanians)[7] are often held to be extinct, thylacine narratives exhibit an uncanny form of unforgetfulness. Guilt and unforgetfulness agitate settler Australians' alienation and repression by implicitly drawing upon their "natural" history, a "conquest" that includes the colonial encounter with Indigenous Tasmanians. If Australian history is replete with "black armbands" and "white blindfolds",[8] then Tasmania's past is heralded as one of the bleakest (and perhaps the most blinkered).

Extinction and the undead

Slavoj Zizek has remarked that the fantasy of the return of the living dead is a "fundamental fantasy of contemporary mass culture"[9]. Enlisting Lacan's reading of *Hamlet* and *Antigone*, Zizek cites films such as *Robocop*, *The Terminator*, *Creepshow*, *The Night of the Living Dead* and *Pet Sematary* to illustrate the persistence of this phenomenon. Zizek maintains that the dead "return" only when they have not been buried "properly" and that their return is a sign of a disorder in the symbolic rite. Whereas proper funerary rites ensure, first, that the living may be reconciled to their loss, and second, that the deceased may live in the memory of the living, the improperly buried dead (the unreconciled) return as "collectors of unpaid symbolic debt". In Lacanian terms until the trauma of colonial abjection is reconciled (integrated into our historical memory) the undead will continue to return and haunt the Australian imaginary.[10]

This accounts for why, since September 7, 1936 (when the last thylacine died in captivity), hundreds of people in Tasmania and on mainland Australia claim to have seen living thylacines. As extinctions go, the thylacine's is perhaps one of the most notorious (locally and globally). Of course, extinction and anxiety stemming from

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such losses are not unique to Australia, but as an ecological parable the Tasmanian tiger's demise is widely applicable. In an age of global ecological uncertainty the thylacine is something of an exemplar of the predicament of all threatened fauna. As an iconic extinction "event" the thylacine has become a metonym for extinction.[11] It is thus highly significant that the seventh of September is National Threatened Species Day. We live in an age of mass extinction; an age described by paleoanthropologists Richard Leakey and Roger Lewin as the sixth age of extinction.[12] While some may find solace in the fact that mass extinctions have occurred before, Leakey and Lewin conclude that the projected rate of extinctions threatens life on earth.

"Extinction is forever" is an environmentalist slogan that has great resonance in Australia. In the global tally of extinctions for the past four hundred years, Australia has the ignominious distinction of having "lost" approximately half the world's mammals.[13] Conservation biology in Australia has thus been referred to as "the dismal science",[14] whose task it is to nurse the doomed remnants of the continent's unique biota. Australian anthropology in the first half of the twentieth century could have been similarly named. Anthropologists such as Baldwin Spencer and Radcliffe-Brown saw themselves as cataloguers of the traditions of a doomed race or a dying culture, respectively. The themes of human and non-human extinction are cognate on this island situated at Australia's southern extremity.

Formerly known as Van Diemen's Land, Tasmania invokes mythological ferment in the Australian imaginary. Mainlanders joke about Tasmania as a cultural backwater, an island of "inbreds". Even its physical geography is suggestive: "its shape some say is like a heart, others call it a cunt".[15] Tasmanian novelist Richard Flanagan has remarked that all Australia's "darkness"—its convict past, its racism, environmental destruction, "redneckery and homophobia" —is condensed into Tasmania. In Flanagan's mind, the island becomes the repository of a national displacement. Tasmania, he says, is a symbol of all that settler Australians "despise about themselves".[16] Whatever its "true" nature, for many Australians the island has a dark, colonial past. Australian historians, Russel Ward, Patrick O'Farrell and Manning Clark have all made mention of the legacy of convict origins extant in the national identity. Ward presents elements of the convict character as affirmation of Australian uniqueness, while Manning Clark and O'Farrell tend toward a darker psychoanalytical appraisal of a collective amnesia at work in the Australian psyche which blocks the memory of the convict past.[17]

There are also other Australian penal sites but Van Diemen's Land condenses the most brutal reminders of the grisly past. As many Australians would be aware Port Arthur's miseries were revisited in 1996 when Martin Bryant shot and killed thirty-five people during a violent and bloody rampage. In Lacanian terms the blond-haired Bryant appeared possessed by Port Arthur's demons—an avenging, obscene figure returning to claim the debt accrued by the traumas of convict abjection—and yet a number of media commentators suggested Tasmania had undergone "a loss of innocence", a claim that seemed to wilfully ignore the island's horrific colonial history.[18]

Mythologically speaking Tasmania has a sinister nature, its primaeval forests harbouring manifold ghosts—spectres of the State's "gulag", phantom thylacines and spirits of the island's original inhabitants. Tasmanian Aboriginal activist, Michael Mansell, views the island's history as one of "murder, brutality and

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shame",[19] which may explain why the small island has sometimes been "forgotten" in cartographic sketches of Australia.[20] Whereas New Zealand clearly has "North" and "South" islands, Tasmania has never achieved the latter status. Hence Tasmania is also "physically" marginal.

The last Tasmanian tiger

> Our cots we fence with firing
> and slumber while we can
> To keep the wolves and tigers from us
> in Van Diemen's Land
> (extract from "The Poacher", a nineteenth century ballad).[21]

In 1805 the first scientific description of the thylacine written by Tasmania's Lieutenant-Governor Paterson was published in the *Sydney Gazette and New South Wales Advertiser*:

> An animal of a truly singular and nouvel description was killed by dogs the 30th of March ... it must be considered of a species hitherto unknown, and certainly the only powerful and terrific of the carnivorous and voracious tribe yet discovered on any part of New Holland or its adjacent islands. It is very evident this animal is destructive, and lives entirely on animal foods; as on dissection his stomach was found filled with a quantity of kangaroo ... The form of the animal is that of the hyoena, at the same time strongly reminding the observer of the appearance of a low wolf. The lips do not appear to conceal the tusks.[22]

One hundred and twenty five years later the last confirmed "wild" thylacine was shot dead in Tasmania's northwest. On September 7, 1936 the last of the world's largest marsupial carnivores died in Hobart's Domain Zoo. In the same year, the Tasmanian government introduced a ban on the trapping and shooting of tigers. Phantom thylacines continue to be protected by this legislation. Thylacines had become a zoological curiosity from the mid-nineteenth century in part because they were anomalous (marsupial carnivores), and in part because they were increasingly becoming rare in the wild. Tigers were hunted because powerful vested interests accused them of decimating the island's sheep flocks. This slaughter was sanctioned by a number of state and private bounty schemes, the first of which was introduced by the Van Diemen's Land Company (VDLC) in 1830. The VDLC bounty scheme effectively ran until 1914. Thylacine scalps commanded double the price of other known "pests" of the day such as Tasmanian devils and wild dogs.[23] Despite growing evidence to the contrary, from the 1820s until the early twentieth century the thylacine was targeted by powerful vested interests as the paramount menace to the sheep industry.

The shepherd's feelings for the tiger are evident in the ballad acting as this section's epigraph. Richard Bowler a ticket-of-leave pastoralist of Broadmarsh writing to his brother in 1835 stated that while the thylacine "will run away from any person ... she will destroy sheep".[24] Similarly, a letter to *The Mercury* by Edward Cotton in the early 1855 is indicative of the pastoralists' opinion of the tiger:

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> No sooner was the sheep introduced than the tiger wolf began to attack the flocks and has ever since shown a most remarkable appetite for mutton, preferring the flesh of that most useful and easily mustered quadruped to that of the kangaroo.[25]

Thylacine destruction was officially sanctioned when in 1888 pastoralists successfully lobbied the Tasmanian government to introduce a bounty of one pound for each adult thylacine and ten shillings per juvenile.[26] Over 2,000 thylacine bounties were paid by the State government during the twenty-one years the scheme was in operation. By the time the government bounty scheme ceased in 1909 thylacines had become extremely rare.[27] As scientist and historian Robert Paddle, author of *The Last Tasmanian Tiger* (an insightful examination of the political context in which ideas about the thylacine and its biology have been created and disseminated), sadly observes "the decimation of the species to the point of no return was obtained through the expenditure of a mere £2132.10.0".[28]

Paddle is adamant that the thylacine's reputation as a sheep killer was grossly exaggerated and largely untenable. Furthermore, Paddle demonstrates that many scientists have subsequently supported this misrepresentation. His view based on meticulous examination of the historical record is that the accusation of being a sheep killer was initially fabricated by VDLC manager, Edward Curr, in an effort to cover up the mismanagement of the company's operations in the northwest of the state.[29] Based on the records of the first eighty years of Tasmanian settlement, Paddle maintains that "the occasional thylacine ... took the occasional sheep from the occasional farm".[30]

Not all colonial endeavours were aimed at eradicating the tiger pest. At least three notable colonial observers warned of the thylacine's imminent extinction. In the 1860s, the naturalist John Gould remarked that the thylacine would soon suffer the same fate as the wolf in England and Scotland. Historian John West, too, predicted that "as every available spot of land is now occupied, it is probable that in a very few years this animal, so highly interesting to the zoologist, will become extinct".[31] The Melbourne-based botanist, Baron Ferdinand von Mueller, regarded the thylacine's fate as symptomatic of the European threat to the Australian environment. In 1865 Mueller tried unsuccessfully to initiate a captive breeding program for "the species, ere long perhaps extinct".[32]

Mueller's, West's and Gould's prophecies did not go entirely unheeded. Owen details that in the early twentieth century advocates of a nascent conservationism lobbied around the plight of the thylacine. In 1914, Professor of Biology at University of Tasmania, Thomas Flynn (the father of actor Errol Flynn) called for a sanctuary to be established for remnant thylacines.[33] In 1917 Clive Lord, director of Hobart's Tasmanian museum, attempted to save the beleaguered thylacine: observing that "a war of extermination has been waged against the 'Tigers' they are now rare, and are only found in the most rugged parts of the island".[34] In 1928 the Tasmanian Advisory Committee for native fauna recommended that the thylacine be protected, however many landowners opposed the proposal and it was defeated.

Thylacines posed an alleged threat to the economic viability of the pastoral industry but they also threatened the colonial process of civilising Tasmanian nature. Large carnivores metaphorically mirror human animality. The persecution of thylacines emphasises the contradictions and inconsistencies of anthropocentric

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symbolisms. But the question remains: What kind of humanity is mirrored by this animality?

As evident in colonial scientific descriptions, the tiger, *thylacinus cynocephalus*—meaning pouched thing with a dog head[35]—suffered from a multitude of "beastly" associations. In scientific and popular accounts the thylacine has been referred to as a hyaena, opossum hyaena, tiger, zebra-wolf, zebra-opossum and tiger-wolf.[36] The thylacine's reputation has been tarnished by scientific and popular allusions to its carnivorous feline or canine resemblances (including tigers, wolves or hyena) even though its closest relatives were other marsupial carnivores of the order *Dasyuroidea*, such as quolls, marsupial mice and the Tasmanian devil. Its taxonomic uniqueness was greatly diminished by what Paddle calls the scientific community's overarching faith in "marsupial inferiority"[37] born of European "placental chauvinism".[38] Here, the scientific and the mythological converge; for the Tasmanian tiger is an anomalous creature. The tiger was a large marsupial carnivore with very distinctive anatomical features, including: a jaw that opened 120 degrees; a tail which, like the kangaroo's was rigid and could be used as a prop enabling it to stand on its hind feet; a pouch that opened from the rear; and a most peculiar gait (presumably because of its rigid tail). Furthermore, as Paddle demonstrates, scientific descriptions of thylacine behaviours have repeatedly reproduced popular mythology. Of the many "fantastic behaviours"[39] ascribed to the animal, vampirism is the most extraordinary (and illuminating). Le Souëf and Burrell authors of *The Wild Animals of Australasia* (1926) observed that Tasmanians: "seem to have a superstitious dread of the "hyena" ... and kill the wolf whenever the opportunity offers ... some will even smash the wolf to pulp afterward". In the 1950s, three professional thylacine experts published comments on the tiger's blood-feeding habit and many scientists continued to mention vampirism in publications up until at least the 1990s.[40]

In contemporary popular narratives thylacines and the island's hinterland become cognate with gruesome accounts of colonial convict cannibalism. In Jody Dwyer's horror film *Dying Breed* (2008) a party of hikers in search of thylacines encounters a family of cannibals descended from Alexander Pearce.[41] These symbolic resonances have a considerable historical trajectory. Paddle notes a newspaper report of 1824 labelled Pearce a vampire and the former name for the mountainous region between Lake St Clair and the west coast was Transylvania.[42]

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Shooting the last tiger

We now know that Wilfred Batty shot dead the last confirmed wild thylacine in Tasmania's northwest in 1930 (see Figure 1). A photograph is a symbolic form of capture. Retrospectively the image of Batty is suggestive of the barbaric colonial abjection of nature, depicting a "shoot it if it moves" mentality. But other colonial images of the thylacine reveal what could best be described as a macabre affection for the hapless beast. The earliest photographic record (dated 1869) shows a tiger bound and suspended by the hind legs, the proud hunter admiring the specimen (see Figure 2). In a later image, the distance between man and beast is diminished; two men proudly hold the suspended tiger by the hind legs (Figure 3). By 1912, Albert Quarrel literally cradles his quarry across his knee in a compassionate embrace (see Figure 4).

Figure 1. Wilfred Batty with last known thylacine killed in the wild. Mawbanna 1930.

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Searches and sightings

Shooting a rare tiger (with either gun or camera) and capturing an extinct one are very different enterprises. The most explicit demonstration of the belief in the continued existence of thylacines is in the number of searches and sightings since its "disappearance" in 1936. The forerunner of Tasmania's National Parks Service, the Animal and Birds Protection Board (ABPB) undertook two expeditions in search of thylacines in 1937 and 1938. These quests were concentrated in the Franklin River district, on Tasmania's west coast, an area then proposed as a sanctuary for thylacines and other Tasmanian fauna. On both these expeditions tiger tracks were discovered and plaster casts made, but no thylacines were sighted. This was to be the first of numerous state and privately funded searches for remnant thylacines.

In August 1945, the naturalist (and director of the Healesville Sanctuary in Victoria), David Fleay, was granted approval from the ABPB for the capture of a thylacine pair. Accompanied by local experts and knowledgeable bushmen, Fleay first concentrated his search in the Jane River area in Tasmania's southwest. Prompted by a truck driver's sighting on the Queenstown-Hobart road, the team relocated camp to the Raglan Ranges. Here they set up traps and snares. Using all manner of live bait—including possum, sheep and poultry—they caught many native animals and several large feral cats, but no thylacines. Tramping to Old Frenchman's Track on the west coast Fleay's team claims to have heard the tiger's peculiar cry:

> That night as we sat before the fire there came from an adjacent high hillside a most peculiar cry. It suggested the brief sharp creak of a door and was quite unlike any cry of a mammal or bird that I have ever heard. . . . here at last it seemed we were listening to the voice of an animal that in our estimation was almost a phantom.[43]

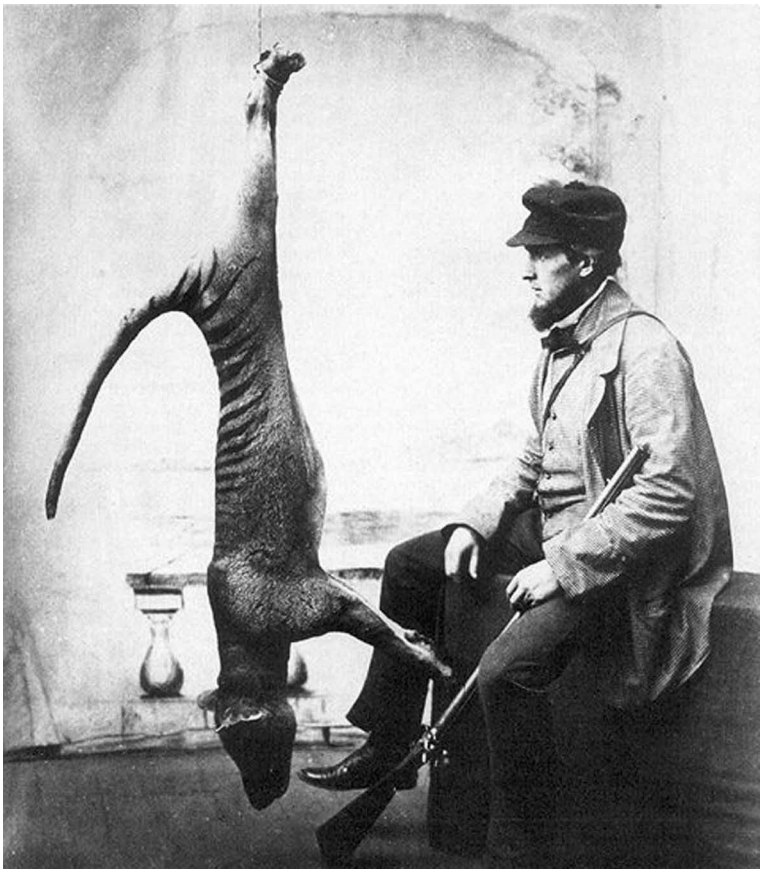

Figure 2. Mr Weaver and suspended tiger, 1869.

Nevertheless, Fleay's team returned empty handed. In 1950, five thousand dollars was offered by a New York newspaper for photographs of this phantom. In 1953, the year of Queen Elizabeth II's coronation, the Fauna Board of the Tasmanian National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS) received a request from the London Zoological Society for a thylacine to form part of a special coronation marsupial collection.[44] Following a spate of sightings in the mid-1950s, the ABPB proposed another search in 1957, led by zoologist Eric Guiler which reignited the imagination not only of Tasmanians but also Walt Disney Productions and *Life* magazine. In 1964, with 175,000 snares having been set and no thylacines captured, the ABPB search was abandoned. In 1966, the World Wildlife Fund (WWF) granted one thousand dollars to Tasmania's ABPB to research thylacine sightings. Between 1968 and 1972 the most exhaustive search for thylacines was undertaken by Tasmanian real estate agent/dairy farmer James Malley, Sydney zoologist, Jeremy Griffith and Bob Brown. After extensive lobbying by the trio, including the posting of a reward of one hundred dollars for tiger tracks, funding was acquired (from the *Australian* newspaper and the British Tobacco Company) which enabled them to use radio transmitters in an attempt to monitor thylacines in remote areas. In all, twenty-five such monitoring stations were set up across northern Tasmania without success. In

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Figure 3. Female thylacine killed by C. Penny, Arthur River, 1922. Collection: Tasmanian Museum and Art Gallery.

1979, the WWF granted a further 55,000 dollars to the NPWS for a study of thylacine behaviour and biology. This was to be the basis of Steven Smith's report, published in 1980, which drew upon fieldwork and analysis of all known thylacine sightings in Tasmania.

In 1983, American philanthropist and media tycoon Ted Turner offered a one hundred thousand dollar reward for proof of the continued existence of the tiger. During the parliamentary debate in 1987 (referred to above), Bob Brown scoffed at the then National Tourism Awards chairwoman Ita Buttrose's proposal that five million dollars be allocated to another search.[45] In 1998, Tourism Tasmania allegedly negotiated a one million-dollar reward with a firm of Lloyds' underwriters to

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Figure 4. Albert Quarrel and tiger killed at Fitzgerald, 1912. Collection: Tasmanian Museum and Art Gallery.

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confirm the existence of the thylacine. In March 2005, as part of its 125th anniversary celebrations the Australian news magazine *The Bulletin* offered a $1.25 million reward for a living thylacine. When the offer expired in June 2005 no evidence of the animal's existence was brought forward. More recently, a Tasmanian tour operator, Stewart Malcolm, offered another $1.75 million.

Many of these quests were in response to claimed thylacine sightings. Since the 1930s, hundreds of reports of thylacine sightings in Tasmania have been received by museums, the University of Tasmania, government departments, the press and other media. One such incident in August 1961, regarded as "the most positive sighting of a live tiger" since 1936,[46] occurred at Sandy Cape on Tasmania's west coast. On that evening crayfishermen Bill Morrison and Laurie Thompson were woken (according to one version) by the noise of an animal in one of the traps they had set to catch bait for their crayfish pots. One newspaper report claimed Thompson clubbed the tiger to death with a piece of wood and buried the body under a sheet of corrugated iron, while another stated the animal escaped. In keeping with the horror genre tone of this narrative, the pair later returned to the site to retrieve the evidence, only to discover that the carcass had disappeared. Morrison and Thompson were both adamant they had sighted a thylacine, which the former described as:

> about the size of a kelpie dog. . . . The tail was rigid. The animal's coat was dark, [with] only one stripe behind the shoulders and extending around the chest.[47]

Another allegedly significant sighting occurred in 1982. Hans Naarding, an experienced wildlife researcher was working in the Togari/Arthur River region in the northwest of the State. Asleep in the back of his vehicle, Naarding woke in the early hours, swung his spotlight into the darkness and to his surprise illuminated a large

thylacine standing some six or seven metres away. His camera was beyond reach so he remained still in order to observe the animal for as long as possible.

> I saw the creature for three minutes, which is one hell of a long time. It stood absolutely still and every part of him was clearly visible. It was a fully-grown male wearing a fine (sandy-coloured) coat which was in good condition. I counted twelve black stripes over its back. It had a massive angular head with small rounded ears. The tail was very slender, but very thick at the butt, quite unlike the tail implant of a dog ... It just stood there staring into the distance – he didn't seem to notice me or the driving rain.[48]

The creature moved only once to exhibit the characteristic giant gaping yawn of the thylacine. When Naarding attempted to grasp his camera bag the animal darted away at the disturbance. Although they monitored a 250 square kilometre area around the site for fourteen months after this alleged sighting, NPWS officers found no trace of a thylacine.

Steven Smith, a NPWS scientist, studied each of the three hundred and twenty reported thylacine sightings made in Tasmania between 1934 and 1980.[49] Smith devised a point system and awarded each sighting a rating based on the bush skills and character of the witness; corroborative evidence from police; and either of the former supported by further sightings or field evidence. Based on this scheme, Smith rated one hundred and six of the sightings to be good or better. In summary of his findings Smith states:

> Investigations of the past, and recent sightings revealed that most are reported by responsible and reliable witnesses, many of whom are quite convinced that they have seen a Tasmanian tiger. The fate of this rare animal is a matter of great interest and public concern, particularly in Tasmania. Publicity associated with sightings and searches is sometimes intense and dramatic, and may have subconsciously influenced some of the witnesses. There are, however, a number of sightings that have occurred at close quarters, in good visibility which are very impressive, and alternative explanations are difficult to find.[50]

Smith goes on to say that, given the time that has elapsed without conclusive proof of its survival, the thylacine is "probably extinct". But he ambiguously adds that the quantity and quality of many of the sightings would also suggest the possibility of the thylacine's survival. Paddle, however, is adamant that "the criterion for establishing the existence of the thylacine beyond 1936 can only be met through the production of a body, either dead, or, preferably alive".[51]

A recent study by ecological economists Erwin Bulte, Richard Horan and Jason Shogren concluded:

> A viable [thylacine] population could possibly exist ... The low density, the shyness of the animals, and their nocturnal habits would prevent frequent encounters between these predators and humans. Similarly, some of the hundreds of unconfirmed thylacine sightings may have been correct as individual animals spill out of their habitat onto nearby fields or land (former tiger habitat).[52]

Bulte's and his colleagues' views may well be justified given that other Australian mammals have returned from the dead, such as the Bridled Nail-Tail Wallaby,

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Gilbert's Potoroo and Leadbetter's possum (Victoria's state emblem, rediscovered in 1961 having been unsighted in fifty years).

Healy and Cropper offer their own range of possible interpretations of thylacine sightings without committing to any one in particular. Intriguingly, one explanation they propose is that thylacines and other Australian "mystery" animals, including yowies, bunyips and alien big cats[53] are not "real" creatures at all, but paranormal phenomena that at different times and places emerge from another dimension into the Australian bush. Healy and Cropper cite Aboriginal beliefs in spirit beings in addition to the temporal and spatial concurrence of sightings of different "species" to lend credibility to their crypto-zoological argument. For example, the sightings of thylacines in western Victoria overlap with sightings of the "Grampians puma". Likewise, big cats, yowies and thylacines have all been reported since 1912 in "close proximity" near Pambula in New South Wales.

The thylacine's un-dead status together with the bizarre assemblage of tiger sighting narratives emphasise the thylacine's powerful grip on the Australian imaginary. The thylacine's liminality is further enhanced by the reports of over one thousand people who claim to have seen thylacines outside of Tasmania in mainland Australia.[54] There are many eyewitness reports of the "Nannup tiger" in Western Australia, the "Ozenkadnook tiger" in western Victoria, the "Wonthaggi monster" in Gippsland, Victoria, the "Cape Tribulation tiger" in North Queensland, and the "Tantanoola tiger" in South Australia (see Figure 5), to name but a few.[55] It is noteworthy that Healy and Cropper's work begins with a chapter on the thylacine, followed by chapters on other crypto-zoological beasts such as big cats, yowies and bunyips. The inference is that thylacines are mythological creatures whether they exist or not.

Figure 5. The Tantanoola "tiger" on display in the Tantanoola Hotel, 2011. Photograph: Nicholas Smith.

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What then of the desire to produce a living thylacine? Journalist Mark Whittaker, like Steven Smith and Guiler, expresses his desire to share in the popular belief in the tiger's existence:

> I am constantly torn between better judgement – cynicism – and these seemingly credible, earnest people who gain nothing but ridicule in coming forward. I want to believe them and, as the interviews go on, I do. Then I don't. Then maybe.[56]

Whittaker's ambivalence was set to be superseded by genetic technology announced in 1999 that promised a *Jurassic Park*-style cloning of thylacine specimens. The cloning team consisting of Archer, molecular geneticist/taxonomist, Dr Don Colgan and a conservation geneticist Dr Karen Firestone, attempted to bring the marsupial back from "beyond extinction".[57] Various estimates of the project's chances of success were proposed; in 1999 Colgan and Archer claimed that "people could own Tasmanian tigers as pets within 50 years" while by 2002 this had blown out to 200 years.[58] However in 2004, Professor Archer left the Australian Museum and in February of that year the thylacine cloning project was abandoned due in part to poor DNA samples.

Cloning remains experimental and the thylacine project has been described as "big time dreamtime" and not likely to resurrect the tiger in the immediate future.[59] Other resurrection technologies are closer at hand.[60] Australian Holographics has created a three-dimensional holographic diorama of a family of thylacines. Reproduced by a process known as rainbow transmission holography, the diorama depicts an adult male thylacine perched on a rock overlooking a mother and her pup.[61] For the meantime, a hologram may be the closest science gets to resurrection.

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The last Tasmanians

If an air of inevitability accompanied the thylacine's demise, colonists held a similar viewpoint with regard to the apparently unavoidable fate of Tasmania's first peoples. It was inevitable that European agriculturalists and pastoralists would clear the most suitable land; it was however not inevitable that the Black War that ensued would be largely forgotten and naturalised to the extent that colonial observers equated the Palawa with the transformed landscape: "the fallen black, like the uprooted forest ... an encumbrance removed".[62]

Early colonists commented favourably on the Palawa's demeanour, but hostility developed with the colonists' rapacious demand for territory. The charm of the natives' "simplicity" gave way to censure and hatred. As West noted, the colonists came to describe the natives as "importunate" and "intrusive", then as "treacherous" and "blood-thirsty", then finally, as "devils" and "beasts".[63] Tasmania has a limited amount of arable land; most of it is confined to the fertile plains and river valleys. These riparian corridors, long cultivated by Palawa firing[64] where the Palawa's target flora and fauna were most plentiful, were also the most attractive to the pastoralists. As they advanced, the colonists competed with the Palawa for game; little native plant food remained once the land was under cultivation or stocked with cattle and sheep. Consequently the dispossessed Palawa were forced into the mountains where food was scarce. With the dwindling availability of native foodstuffs the Palawa took to the

Europeans' food. Unwilling to assume the responsibility for destroying the native food supply the colonists looked upon the dispossessed Palawa as thieves.

At the time Lieutenant-Governor Arthur was overseeing his island gulag he was also fighting a guerrilla war conducted by the natives. Colonist-Palawa conflict reached its peak during the Black War of the 1820s when vast land grants were issued to prospective pastoralists. In 1823, there were 175,704 hectares granted to the colonists, the largest alienation of land in a single year in the history of the island. By 1830 land grants amounted to half a million hectares. In the period 1816–1823 the sheep population increased from 54,600 to 200,000; by 1826 it was in excess of half a million.[65] The Palawa retaliated, spearing shepherds, sheep and cattle, burning huts and crops. During the Black War, state-sanctioned search-and-capture parties often led by a member of the local constabulary were licensed to kill Palawa without fear of legal punishment. If the colonial administration's attitude to the rebellious Palawa population was brutal, the colonists' attitudes on the frontier were often barbarous. Bounty hunters received £5 per Palawa adult and £2 for each child that was brought in from the hinterland and, in at least one instance, convicts were additionally offered half-pardons or tickets-of-leave.[66] George Augustus Robinson recorded the VDLC was also responsible for a number of attacks on Palawa.[67]

Much of the available arable land was under the colonists' control and to drive out the remnant "wild" Aboriginal population Arthur adopted his infamous strategy—the Black Line. Two thousand two hundred men formed an extensive human cordon designed to drive the hostile remnant Aboriginal population southeast into the Tasman Peninsula. Lasting six weeks, the Line was regarded by Arthur as an expensive disappointment, with many Palawa remaining at large and Palawa attacks continuing on settlers.

The failure of the Black Line coincided with Arthur's appointment of George Augustus Robinson to make friendly relations with the surviving Palawa. In the course of six expeditions from 1830 to 1837 Robinson traversed the island guided by (among others) the leaders of the Bruny Island tribe, Woorrady and Trugannini. The Conciliator, as Robinson came to be known, introduced a further bounty system to expedite the capture of "a dying, disintegrating and demoralised people".[68] Robinson's "friendly mission" rounded up the surviving Palawa with inducements of protection, shelter, food and clothing. Their tragic fate is now known globally, and an integral if unsettling aspect of Tasmania's history.

On 5 March 1869, the day after the death of William Lanney, allegedly the last male Aboriginal Tasmanian, *The Mercury* recorded the occasion as heralding "the total extinction" of "a once numerous division of the human family". Lamenting the inevitability of such extinction and pondering the virtues of British colonisation, the author continued: "Wherever the white man has set his foot ... there the savage races have begun rapidly to degenerate, and to die out under the shadow of the 'pale-faces'".[69]

Fearing the predations of mutilators and body snatchers, Trugannini pleaded that upon her death her body be sewn inside a bag, weighted down with rocks and thrown into the sea. When she died in Hobart in May 1876 "extraordinary precautions"[70] were in place to prevent a repeat of the grisly disfigurement of Lanney's cadaver.[71] Trugannini's wishes were ignored; police guarded her body while it lay in the Hobart hospital, and then secretly relocated it to the convict Female Factory at the Cascades where she was buried in the prison graveyard so as to thwart would-be grave robbers.

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Notwithstanding, the Royal Society of Tasmania exhumed her body two years later and her skeleton was removed to the Tasmanian Museum; it was on public display there from 1904 until 1947. Following media claims that the public display was in bad taste, the skeleton was removed and placed in the museum's vault. In 1975 after the museum contested ownership, the skeleton became the property of the Crown. One year later Trugannini's requests were partly observed; her remains being cremated and her ashes spread in the D'Entrecasteaux Channel.

With the death of Truganinni, colonial Tasmanians imagined the Aboriginal "problem" concluded: the land was emptied of its original inhabitants and "settlement" was complete. But the myth of Palawa extinction denied the existence of the Furneaux "Islander" communities and other surviving indigenous Tasmanians. When Edward Stephens, a missionary schoolmaster arrived at Cape Barren Island (one of the largest of the 52 islands in the Furneaux group) in 1890, he found a community of 110 people consisting of 30 adults and 80 children. These descendants of sealers, escaped convicts, and Tasmanian and mainland Aborigines, earned their livelihood from muttonbirding, sealing, whaling, fishing, itinerant labouring and snaring.[72]

Some non-Aboriginal Tasmanians continue to disavow the existence of Palawa.[73] In 1983, when the Tasmanian Government challenged the Federal Government's intervention in the damming of the Franklin River, another contest arose concerning ownership of a number of Aboriginal heritage sites in the southwest region. During the High Court hearing, counsel for the Tasmanian Government claimed the sites could not be of significance to the Aborigines because the Tasmanian Aboriginal "race" was extinct.[74]

Extinction is the ligature that binds Palawa and thylacine in the Australian imaginary. The settlers' maladaptation to the environment and separation from the indigenous "other" achieves symbolic inversion in the Tasmanian tiger. This inversion is powerfully captured in a painting by Karen Casey, a Palawa artist whose work explores themes of environmental degradation and colonial abjection. Casey's painting "Got the Bastard" (see Figure 6) is an explicit depiction of the Tasmanian settler's conquest of colonial nature and native. In this parody of William Dobell's "The Billy Boy" (1943),[75] a grotesquely proportioned seated human figure dominates the canvas; his bloated Popeye-like forearms cradle a rifle and he bares his teeth in half-grimace-half-smile. In the background, a thylacine, scarcely discernible, is suspended upside-down and rigid. The painting's title apparently emanates from the figure's mouth as he gloats over his marksmanship. Casey's disturbing composition shrewdly juxtaposes the devastation of Tasmanian biota with the destruction of Aboriginal Tasmanians. Eco-narratives of extinction deny and express the nightmare of the colonists' dispossession and murder of Palawa. It is significant that the thylacine in Casey's painting hangs upside-down, partly mimicking colonial images of the thylacine (see Figures 1–4) and because structurally, the mythological Trugannini and the mythological thylacine invert one another. Thylacine narratives posit existence in the face of extinction, whereas the myth of Trugannini posits extinction in the face of existence.[76]

Conclusion: the persistence of the living dead

The thylacine's status as simultaneously "probably extinct" and "possibly surviving" gives rise to a creative tension. This tension generates a space in which human

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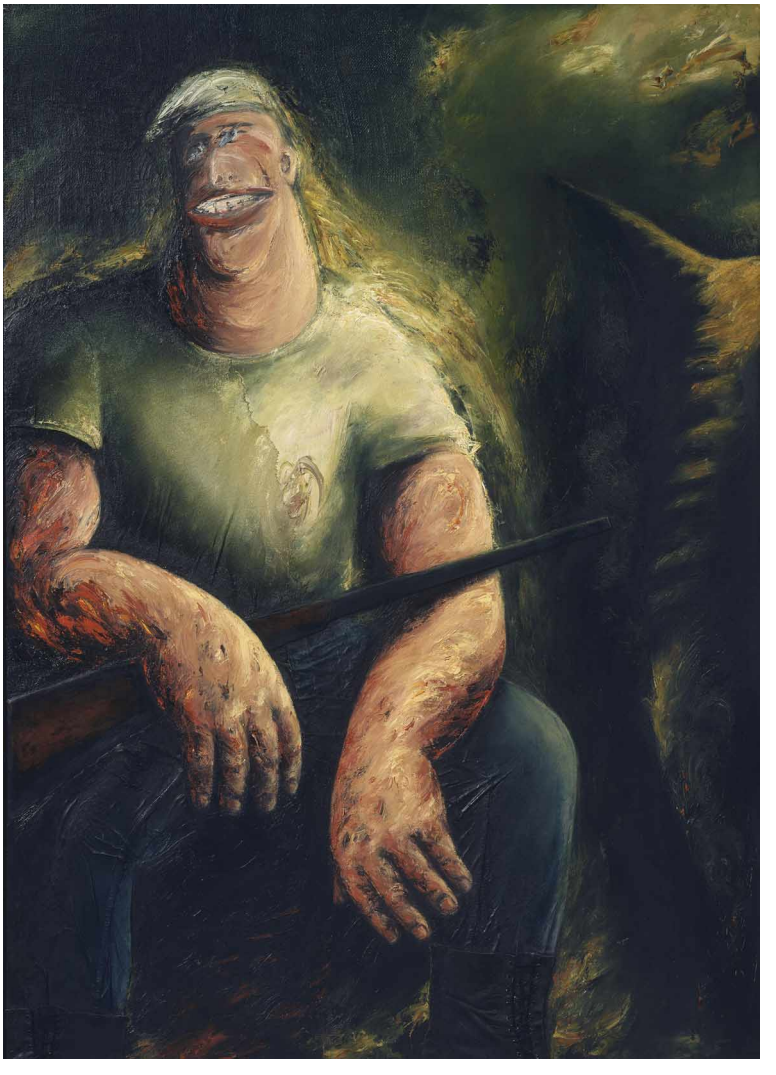

Figure 6. Karen Casey, *Got the bastard* 1991. Oil and mixed media on canvas. National Gallery of Australia, Canberra. Purchased 1995.

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imagination can flourish. The thylacine's anomalous status and its unusual marsupial characteristics heighten its liminality. Any creature that challenges or defies conventional classification is potentially a symbolic vehicle onto which many imaginings may and will be loaded. Human symbolism thrives on such ambiguity.[77]

As indicated by my introductory discussion of parliament debating the Tasmanian flag and the sensationalist accounts of the Australian Museum wanting to reanimate the tiger, this particular marsupial is widely utilised as a symbol of "Tasmanian-ness".[78] (As a symbol of all things Tasmanian the thylacine also has export potential.[79]) But as I have outlined here, this sign can also be interpreted as a three-fold avoidance of encountering the real. In the first instance (as an aspect of the broader ecological crisis) species loss and extinction may be addressed by simple

disavowal (I know extinction is disastrous but I don't believe it). Secondly, one can adopt an obsessional response; (I will do all I can, search and/or reanimate the tiger, to avert the unspeakable). And lastly, one can interpret species loss and extinction as an "answer of the real", a sign that contains a particular message; "the neurotic transformation of the crisis into a traumatic kernel"[80] (namely ongoing extinctions are a punishment for our ruthless colonial exploitation of native and nature).[81] In the colonists' actions is sown the fate of all settler Australians; as Martin Flanagan puts it, having "killed off a part of themselves that they will henceforth seek in endless and fantastic ways".[82]

Thylacine extinction is a direct consequence of colonial social and economic imperatives. These imperatives, through the agency of colonial science, naturalised the demise of nature and native in the Antipodes. In the present the exploitation of Indigenous Australians and of Australian nature seems essentially unchanged. As Jeremy Beckett succinctly observes "the place of Australian Aborigines in Australian society is that of a minority managed through specialized institutional structures that can properly be termed colonial".[83] On the one hand, while settler Australians may imagine that we have moved beyond the illiberal and discriminatory practices of the colonial era, unease arises out of international recognition of the fourth world status in which many Indigenous Australians continue to live. On the other hand Australians might imagine themselves better environmental managers than their forebears who lost half of the world's mammals and yet the rate of extinction of less iconic species than the thylacine continues to accelerate.

In being or non-being the thylacine elicits desires not solely ecological. The thylacine, "the living dead", continues to return to the settler Australian imaginary because it has been improperly "buried". The power of thylacine and Truganninni narratives lies in the tension between being and non-being; both narratives condense, conflate and suppress these crucial themes—native and nature—in the Australian imaginary. On the surface, thylacine narratives appear redemptive in terms of the loss incurred by "nature"; one cannot hear or read of the thylacine without acknowledging loss. But might it not also be possible that this displacement is counter-intuitive? Could thylacine narratives be a means of settler Australians obtusely engaging with a terrifying colonial history? Or indeed a means for settler Australians and Palawa to confront the harsh realities of their mutually constituted identities? Nature and native are interfused and obfuscated, but in the guise of embracing the ecological blunders of the past, thylacine mythologies agitate the settler's forgetfulness of the atrocities of the colonial encounter with Palawa. Has the legacy of the defilement of William Lanney's and other Palawa bodies lead to a profound disturbance in the Australian psyche? Until the deaths and the desecration of Palawa (and the lives of their descendants) are accorded their proper place in the historical memory of settler Australians, I suggest that thylacines will continue to haunt the settler Australian imaginary.

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Notes

1. Edith Speers, "Thylacine" in *Here Today . . .*, ed. Joan Woodberry (Tasmania, Fellowship of Australian Writers, 1980), 76.
2. Bernard Smith, *The Spectre of Truganini*. 1980 Boyer Lectures (Sydney, NSW: The Australian Broadcasting Commission).

3. Steve Baker, *Picturing the Beast*: *Animals*, *identity and representation* (Manchester and New York: Manchester University Press, 1993), 25.
4. http://www.ceo.wa.edu.au/home/carey.peter/Tasmanian/tigertales3.html (accessed 17 November 2011).
5. David Owen, *The Tragic Tale of the Tasmanian Tiger* (Crows Nest, NSW: Allen & Unwin, 2003), ix.
6. Archer cited in Woodford, "Unleashing the thylacine", *Age*, May 13, 1999, 1.
7. Palawa is the term used by Tasmanian Aborigines to describe themselves.
8. Patrick Brantlinger, "'Black armband' versus 'white blindfold' history in Australia,'" *Victorian Studies* 46 (2004): 655–74.
9. Slavoj Zizek, *Looking Awry: An Introduction to Jacques Lacan through Popular Culture* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: MIT Press, 1991), 22.
10. Zizek, *Looking Awry*, 23.
11. See also Ricardo De Vos, "Extinction stories: performing abscence(s)" in *Knowing Animals*, eds. Laurence Simmons and Philip Armstrong, (Leiden, The Netherlands: Brill, 2007), 183–95.
12. Richard Leakey and Roger Lewin, *The Sixth Extinction*: *Biodiversity and its Survival* (London: Phoenix, 1996).
13. Since European colonisation, more than 20 Australian mammals, including 10 marsupials have become extinct. In 2008, according to the International Union for Conservation of Nature's (IUCN) Species Survival Commission "Red List" of threatened species, 22 percent of the world's mammals are extinct or critically threatened. 15 percent of mammals are classified as 'data deficient', which indicates that there is little available data on their range, number and chances of survival. http://www.iucn.org/about/work/programmes/species/red_list/ (accessed 17 March 2011).
14. David Bowman and Peter Whitehead, "Is Conservation Biology the Dismal Science?" *Australian Natural History* 24 (1993): 72.
15. Carmel Bird, "Fresh blood, old wounds: Tasmania and guns," *Meanjin* 55.4 (1996): 390. Thus the colloquial Australian expression "map of Tassie" refers to a woman's pubic hair.
16. Richard Flanagan, "Voice from the edge falls on deaf ears," *Australian*, February 23, 1996, 9.
17. Patrick O'Farrell, *The Irish in Australia* (Sydney: New South Wales University Press, 1986); Manning Clark, *A History of Australia* (Carlton, Melbourne University Press, 1962); Russel Ward, *The Australian Legend* (Melbourne: Oxford University Press, 1958).
18. An example of Stanner's "cult of forgetfulness". On May 7, 1996, during the presentation of the Guns Amendment Bill in the Tasmanian parliament, the Leader of the Greens, Christine Milne, acknowledged the work of Dr Bob Brown in lobbying for the ban on semi-automatic military style weapons. In 1991 Brown stated: "This State is not a metropolis. It is largely a rural community with a gun culture that goes back to the days of European invasion. Guns helped cause the near genocide of the Aboriginal people of this island. Guns were responsible for the extinction of the thylacine or Tasmanian Tiger. Guns are today responsible for the majority of suicides in Tasmania. Guns leave us with an unacceptable and tragic level of death and trauma and guns cause too many people – particularly women – to live in fear for their safety." http://www.parliament.tas.gov.au/HansardHouse/isysquery/c5d8d690-f5f3-4051-9cbe-3fcced99f054/8/doc/ (accessed 17 November 2011).
19. *Mercury*, September 12, 1988.
20. The Tasmanian National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS) website formerly included a page headed "Where's Tasmania" with a map showing the island's location in relation to the rest of the world. http://www.parks.tas.gov.au/where/where.html (accessed 12 June 1999). The same map currently appears under the link "About Tasmania" http://www.parks.tas.gov.au/index.aspx?base=7683
21. Cited in Robert Paddle, *The Last Tasmanian Tiger*: *The History and Extinction of the Thylacine* (Melbourne: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 98.
22. Cited in Malcolm Smith, "Review of the Thylacine (Marsupialia, thylacinidae)" in *Carnivorous Marsupials Volume 1*, ed. M. Archer (Mosman: Royal Zoological Society of New South Wales, 1982), 237–38.

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23. Paddle, *The Last Tasmanian Tiger*, 110. In 1830 VDLC offered 5/- for a male, 7/- for a female for fewer than 20 tiger scalps.
24. Cited in Rolls, *Visions of Australia: Impressions of the Landscape 1640–1910* (Port Melbourne: Lothian, 2002), 126.
25. Cited in Quentin Beresford and Garry Bailey, *Search for the Tasmanian Tiger* (Hobart: Blubber Head, 1981), 15.
26. Some parliamentary members held financial interests in the rural economy.
27. Bob Brown, in "The Tasmanian tiger'', *Skyline*, December, 1972, has suggested a disease similar to distemper that allegedly ravaged the population of quolls (*Dasyurid* sp.) and Tasmanian devils (*Sarcophilus harrisii*) at the turn of this century may have decimated the already depleted numbers of thylacines.
28. Paddle, *The Last Tasmanian Tiger*, 167.
29. Paddle, *The Last Tasmanian Tiger*, 98–138.
30. Paddle, *The Last Tasmanian Tiger*, 136.
31. John West, *History of Tasmania* (*Vol. 1*) (Launceston: Henry Dowling, 1852), 323.
32. Robert Paddle, "Mueller's magpies and marsupial wolves: A window into 'what might have been'," *The Victorian Naturalist* 113.4 (1996): 216.
33. Cited in Paddle, *The Last Tasmanian Tiger*, 170.
34. Cited in David Owen, *Thylacine*: *The Tragic Tale of the Tasmanian Tiger* (Crow's Nest, NSW: Allen & Unwin, 2003), 115–16.
35. Paddle, *The Last Tasmanian Tiger*, 7.
36. According to George Augustus Robinson to the Aborigines of Van Diemen's Land the thylacine was known along the east coast as *mannalargenna*; in the Oyster Bay area as *larn.ter*; to the Bruny Islanders as *can.nen.ner*; on the north coast as *clin.ner*; and in the Cape Grim area as *cab.berr.one.nen.er*. Cited in N Plomley ed. *Friendly Mission. The Tasmanian Journals and Papers of George Augustus Robinson 1829–1834* (Tasmanian Historical Research Association, Kingsgrove, NSW: Halstead Press, 1966), 786.
37. Paddle, *The Last Tasmanian Tiger*, 13.
38. Paddle, *The Last Tasmanian Tiger*, 24.
39. Paddle, *The Last Tasmanian Tiger*, 35.
40. Cited in Paddle, *The Last Tasmanian Tiger*, 29–33.
41. Pearce escaped from Macquarie Harbour in 1822 with several other inmates; after nearly four months he was captured and confessed to having killed and eaten three of his fellow escapees.
42. Paddle, *The Last Tasmanian Tiger*, 36.
43. Cited in Beresford and Bailey, *Search for the Tasmanian Tiger*, 34.
44. Eric Guiler, *Tasmanian Tiger*: *A Lesson to be Learnt* (Perth, WA: Abrohols, 1985), 58.
45. Brown, apparently assured of the tiger's extinction by the outcome of his own quest, advanced the view that the installation of the thylacine on the state's flag served a more practical purpose.
46. Cited in Beresford and Bailey, *Search for the Tasmanian Tiger*, 3.
47. Morrison cited in Beresford and Bailey, *Search for the Tasmanian Tiger*, 3.
48. Naarding cited in Tony Healy and Paul Cropper, *Out of the Shadows*: *Mystery Animals of Australia* (Chippendale, NSW: Ironbark, 1994), 17–18.
49. According to Healy and Cropper (p. 9), the total number of Tasmanian sightings exceeded 400 at the time of the publication of their book in 1994.
50. Smith cited in Beresford and Bailey, *Search for the Tasmanian Tiger*, 44.
51. Paddle, *The Last Tasmanian Tiger*, 23.
52. Erwin Bulte, Richard Horan & Jason Shogren, "Is the Tasmanian tiger extinct? A biological-economic re-evaluation,'' *Ecological Economics* 45.2 (2003): 276.
53. Big cats such as pumas, panthers and mountain lions were reputedly kept during WWII as mascots by American troops stationed in various localities in Australia. Allegedly, they were released into the bush. The yowie is Australia's relative of the yeti – a large, hairy, anthropomorph; the bunyip is a smaller "cousin'' of the Loch Ness Monster, inhabiting inland lakes and rivers (cf. Healy and Cropper, 1994).
54. Thylacines inhabited the mainland until approximately 4,000 years ago. Tasmania was linked to the mainland by the Bassian plain until about 12,000 years ago when sea levels

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rose and the land bridge was severed. The thylacine's disappearance on the mainland is contemporaneous with the arrival of the dingo. For a map of thylacine sightings see Buck Emburg and Joan Emburg. http://www.tasmanian-tiger.com/sightings.htm (accessed 22 November 2006).

55. Healy and Cropper, *Out of the Shadows*, 21–53; Mark Whittaker, "Look! There's one!" *Australian Magazine*, November 15–16, 1997, 12–18.
56. Whittaker, "Look! There's one!", 14.
57. John Woodford, "Unleashing the thylacine," *Age*, May 13, 1999, 1.
58. Alan Greer, "Cloning the Thylacine," *Quadrant* LIII.7–8 http://www.quadrant.org.au/magazine/issue/2009/7-8/cloning-the-thylacineJuly-August2009 (accessed 14 March 2011).
59. Sharon Webb, "Thylacine cloning is 'big time dreamtime'", *Australasian Science*, September 1999, 19–21; see also Amy Lynn Fletcher, "Bring 'em back alive: Taming the Tasmanian tiger cloning project," *Technology in Society*, 30; Allen Greer, "Cloning the Thylacine," *Quadrant* LIII.7–8 (2009); Julia Leigh, "Back From the Dead," *Guardian*, May 30, 2002; and Luba Vangelova, "True or False? Extinction is Forever," *Smithsonian* 34.3. The thylacine continues to "breed" in cyberspace. When I searched the World Wide Web in May 1999, I struck over 270 links to the keyword "thylacine"; by August the same search yielded over 600 links. A search in March 2010 yielded 212,000 results. (Of course, the search engine has improved, and more data has been uploaded in the interim.)
60. In Daniel Nettheim's "psychological" drama *The Hunter* (2011) based on the novel by Julia Leigh (*The Hunter*, Ringwood, Victoria: Penguin, 1999). A European mercenary engaged by a biotech company is sent on a mission into the Tasmanian 'wilderness' to kill and extract samples from a solitary extant thylacine. Populated by stereotypical Tasmanians including xenophobic locals, anti-logging feral activists, and violent, disgruntled loggers, the film's best performance is given by the digitally generated thylacine who occupies less than a minute of screen time.
61. See http://wn.com/Australian_Holographics (accessed 14 March 2011).
62. John West, *History of Tasmania* (*Vol. 2*) (Launceston: Henry Dowling, 1852), 94.
63. West, *History of Tasmania* (Vol. 2), 95.
64. See Tim Bonyhady, *The Colonial Earth* (Carlton South, Victoria: Melbourne University Press, 2001), 78–9.
65. Lyndall Ryan, *The Aboriginal Tasmanians* (2nd ed.) (St Leonards, NSW: Allen and Unwin, 1996), 83.
66. Henry Reynolds, *The Fate of a Free People* (Camberwell, Victoria: Penguin, 2004), 113–14.
67. See Norman Plomley, ed., *Friendly Mission*: *The Tasmanian Journals and Papers of George Augustus Robinson 1829–1834* (Kingsgrove, NSW: Halstead Press, 1966), 181–3, 192, 196–7, 202, 210, 231, 235, 603, 607, 689.
68. Lloyd Robson, *A History of Tasmania Volume: Van Diemen's Land from the Earliest Times to 1855* (Melbourne: Oxford University Press, 1983), 221.
69. *Mercury* March 5, 1869, 2.
70. Henry Reynolds, *A History of Tasmania* (Cambridge, New York: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 187.
71. *Mercury*, March 27, 1869, 3. See also Helen MacDonald, *Human Remains*: *Episodes in Human Dissection* (Carlton: Melbourne University Press, 2005). There have been numerous requests by the Tasmanian Aboriginal Centre to the University of Edinburgh's Anatomy Department for the return of Lanney's skull.
72. Lyndall Ryan, *The Aboriginal Tasmanians* (St Lucia, Qld.: University of Queensland Press, 1981), 228–30. From the late eighteenth century, commercial sealing was carried out by American, British and local crews in the Bass Strait islands. The industry also supported a maverick contingent of ship deserters, beachcombers and convict escapees wishing to be far removed from colonial authority. This latter group made a habit of abducting Aboriginal women from the New Holland and Van Diemen's Land coast. Living for many years outside of the State's jurisdiction, the islanders' ambiguous status in the latter part of the nineteenth century was reinforced, on the one hand, by increased government attempts to administer them by virtue of their "uncivilised", "half-caste"

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"degeneracy", and, on the other, by government refusals to grant them rights to land by virtue of their Aboriginality.

73. The 2006 Australian Bureau of Statistics Census estimated the identified number of Palawa as 16,900. http://www.abs.gov.au/ausstats/abs@.nsf/productsbytopic/FE816808B6C80F9DCA2570BF007B06A4?OpenDocument (accessed 23 March 2010).
74. Cited in Ryan *The Aboriginal Tasmanians*, 271.
75. Currently in the collection of the Australian War Memorial, Dobell's work depicts an archetypal Australian male.
76. Trugannini is, as Anderson has observed, a colonial symbol that asserts the non-indigenous existence of the descendants of Tasmanian Aboriginal women and Bass Strait sealers. The myth of 'the last of the Tasmanians' reduces these survivors to the status of "hybrids"; a people with "no history". Ian Anderson, "Reclaiming Tru-ger-nan-ner: de-colonising the symbol," *Art Monthly Australia* December–February 96 (1993): 11.
77. Mary Douglas, *Purity and Danger*: *An Analysis of Concepts of Pollution and Taboo* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1966).
78. See Stephanie Turner, "Negotiating nostalgia: the rhetoricity of thylacine representation in Tasmanian tourism," *Society and Animals* 17.2 (2009): 97–114.
79. In the late 1990s Hobart sculptor Ian Sinclair was commissioned by the Tasmanian state government to make small ceramic thylacine models that were to be presented to visiting dignitaries. In March 2005 the royal visitors Crown Prince Frederik and Crown Princess Mary of Denmark viewed the thylacine material in the Tasmanian Museum.
80. Zizek, Looking Awry, 35.
81. Zizek, Looking Awry, 35.
82. Martin Flanagan, "Tiger! tiger! burning bright," *Age*, May 20, 1999, 13.
83. Jeremy Beckett, "Aboriginality in a Nation-State: The Australian Case," in *Ethnicity and Nation-Building in the Pacific*, ed. Michael C. Howard, (Tokyo: The United Nations University, 1989), 119.

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